

Backstage

A SPECIAL NEWSLETTER - FOR SUBSCRIBERS ONLY

Here's to the future



1995 will be a crucial year for the Amiga, so it's vital that whoever takes over Commodore get their tactics right.

Welcome to another specially hand-crafted edition of *Backstage* - the newsletter dedicated to subscribers of *Amiga Format* - and welcome to the first *AF* of the new year. A year which will, hopefully, see an end to the many problems that have dogged the Amiga during 1994.

My personal wishes for the Amiga over the coming year obviously include a successful take-over of Commodore - and the sooner the better. Although it's still a two-horse race between the Commodore UK crew and Creative Equipment International of Miami, I can't help but favour the UK management team's buy-out.

The UK operation has worked hard to maintain and help the Amiga line grow while the US-based company did little but make bad decisions and lose money. And since the Amiga heartland is now the UK and Europe, it seems only right that things should be controlled from this territory instead of thousands of miles away in the United States, where only a handful of Amigas are in use. (Of course, if CEI win I guess I'll be forced to fly all the way out to Miami to speak to them. Huh... bummer.)

Once the Amiga is back in production, I'd like to see some major changes. Of course,

THE AMIGA FORMAT ANNUAL 1995

From the makers of *Amiga Format* comes 100 pages packed to the brim with more information than you'll know what to do with. There's a round-up of all the best hardware and serious software that has featured in *AF* over the last couple of years. There's the top 20 Amiga and CD32 games of 1994. There's the answers to your most frequently asked questions. And there's a look back at the highs and lows of *Amiga Format*'s year.

Do your Amiga a favour, buy a copy of the *Amiga Format Annual 1995*, your complete buyer's guide.

On sale now!



the A1200 needs to go back on sale as soon as possible: every week-see another, cheaper PC in the shops and another store that's decided to give the Apple Mac some shelf space.

But the A1200 is still the only affordable home computer that caters for everyone. True, PCs are powerful, but they're still pricey and are the least user-friendly machine I've

"Compared to the likes of Sega's Saturn and the Sony PlayStation, the CD32 is a board game."

ever had the displeasure to use. I loath them and never intend buying one.

Once the A1200 starts flooding back to the market (preferably with some decent advertising to back it up) I'm confident that we'll see the Amiga become a major High Street presence again - certainly the public are gagging for it.

But it needs CD-ROM and it needs it badly. CD-ROM has captured the imagination of the computer consumer and if the Amiga wants to compete it needs CD-ROM. Third party drives are OK, but most people (myself included) always feel safer buying the 'official' kit: we need the CD-1200 on shelves or, preferably, an A1200 with built-in CD drive.

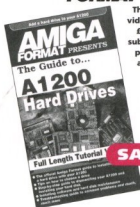
And sod the Full Motion Video cartridge - MPEG1 technology is already outmoded; Video CD is an intermediate technology. While Philips push blindly ahead with their Video CD, the major Japanese manufacturers are already working on High Density CD (HDCD), which can hold four times the amount of information. MPEG1 is only of comparable quality to VHS, and it's obvious that many companies don't feel that it's good enough to develop for.

And considering the lack of compatible software - especially games - why the hell is it playing such a major role in the Amiga CD-

Continued on back page

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Take advantage of our exclusive-to-subscribers offer of two videos for the special price of £19.95 (normal price £29.98). Additional videos cost just £9.99 each. Check out our range of *Amiga Format* videos in this month's issue, then send in the coupon you'll find over the page.

Subscribers' Superdisk

Jason Holborn has put together another fabulous collection of programs for your Superdisk.



ON THIS MONTH'S DISK...

TOP HAT WILLY – Relive the days when the king of the platform game genre was a little animated character called Willy, who was a bit of a party animal and lived in a mansion filled with rabid toilets and manic rabbits.

LOTTERY WINNER – Improve your chances of winning the National Lottery with this brilliant lottery forecast program.

SUPERVIEW – ADPro it may not be, but SuperView is still one of the most powerful image viewing utilities yet. View JPEG, PCX, GIF and IFF images with ease.

LASTALERT2 – Does your Amiga have a habit of crashing suddenly and for no apparent reason? Would you like to know what went wrong? Then you need LastAlert2, the utility which will solve the mystery.

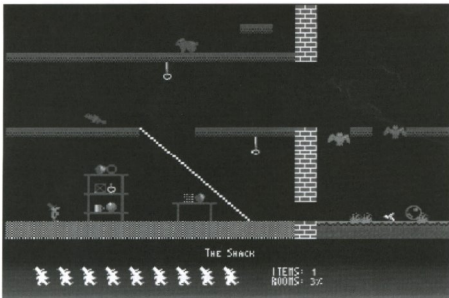
BARCLOCK – Keep track of the time and date without having to look at your watch with this handy Workbench title bar clock and calendar utility.

CGFONT – Enhance your desktop publishing and word processing documents with another CompuGraphic outline font.

GETTING STARTED

You can access all the programs and files on this month's Amiga Format Subscribers' Superdisk by inserting a copy of the Workbench disk into the internal drive of your Amiga and then switching on. Once Workbench has loaded, replace it with your Subscribers' Superdisk and a disk icon appears labelled SUBDISK.

Before you use any of the programs on your Superdisk, make a back-up of the disk using the procedure that's detailed in the Coverdisk pages in AF68. Now store the original disk in a safe place and run all the programs from your copy.



Aaaaah, the memories came flooding back when we found Top Hat Willy on a PD disk.

TOP HAT WILLY

Throwing a party is all well and good but when the fun stops, the cleaning up begins. Top Hat Willy enjoys a good party as much as the next man but he hates having to tidy up. But the problem is that Willy's parties are pretty wild – so much so, in fact, that there's a lot more to clean up than a few empty cans and crisp packets. And, being a bit of a battleaxe, Willy's housekeeper categorically refuses to let him sleep until every single scrap of rubbish has been tidied up.

If you're a computer veteran, you've probably already worked out that Top Hat Willy is a not-very-well-disguised Amiga conversion of the classic 8-bit platform game, Jet Set Willy. Lousy plot aside, the idea is to guide our hero, Willy, through perilous

platform action collecting the little flashing piles of rubbish scattered throughout the game. The play area is spread across a number of locations through which you can freely move backwards and forwards. The heart of the game takes place in Willy's own mansion but you can also go outside (indeed, you start the game next to a lake in Willy's back garden) and even explore the various vaults and caves below the mansion.

This is no ordinary clean up job, however. Willy's house has been left so dirty that ordinary household items and many of the house's inhabitants have mutated into monsters, all of which give Willy a hard time if he is unlucky enough to run into one of them. To evade these mutants, Willy can jump from platform to platform and drop

down to lower platforms. Willy's no Superman, though, so don't let him fall too far or the force of the impact will mould him into a pancake.

SUPERVIEW

In an ideal world, every computer manufacturer and software vendor would agree on common file formats for specific types of data – there would be one format for pictures, another for animations and so on. Although this is largely true among Amiga developers (isn't IFF great!), try to import files from other platforms (such as PC and Mac) and life starts to get very difficult indeed.

Say, for example, you wanted to load a picture you had imported from a friend's PC into your Amiga so that you could edit it in

BE A LOTTERY WINNER

Unless you've spent the last couple of months farming rice in deepest China, you cannot help but have notice that the entire country has gone National Lottery bonkers. Even the staff on Amiga Format have been gripped by Lottery fever – if Steve Jarratt won £2 million, for example, he'd buy himself a bright red 4.2 litre E-type. Nick Veitch would buy himself a fast car (plus some aviar and a football team). Based around Paul's well-established PD Pools predictor utility, Lottery Winner uses a prediction engine which Paul claims is tried and tested. Indeed, Paul says that some people have won amounts totalling over £200 using his pools predictor program.

Obviously, the prediction engine used by Lottery Winner has been tweaked so that the program works within the rules of the National Lottery.

COMPUGRAPHIC FONT

Coliseo CG Font

Add sophistication to your desktop publishing and word processing documents with this beautifully-formed outline font.

This CompuGraphic outline font can't be used with the PageSetter 2 Coverdisk from AF63 but it is still very useful to have.

To install the Coliseo Bold font first boot from your normal Workbench system disks and follow these three steps:

1 Run the Fountain (or Intellifont if you have an A1200 or an A4000) program in your System directory and insert the Subscribers' Superdisk in any drive.

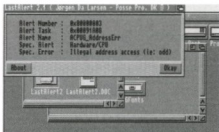
2 Click on the gadget at the top right of the screen under Outline Font Source and then select SUBSDISK from the list of volumes. Now click on the CGFonts drawer

and click on OK. The font on the Superdisk should then be shown in the Source Typefaces list.

3 Click once on the font (a + symbol appears next to it) and then click on Install Marked Typefaces. After a bit of disk swapping, the font is installed on to your Workbench disk.

You may find that there is not enough free space on your Workbench and so some of your files may have to be removed.

IMPORTANT: Don't forget to always work on a back-up of your Workbench disk.

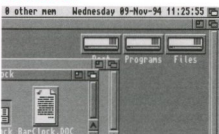


LastAlert 2 enables you to decipher those annoying Guru numbers.

crash occurs, a window is displayed on the Workbench as soon as your Amiga reboots containing all sorts of useful information – such as the Guru code, what program caused the crash and (best of all) a short description of what actually happened.

It's a bit like closing the gate after the horse has bolted – but at least you'll know what went wrong.

BARCLOCK



BarClock lets you keep track of the time without you having to tear your eyes away from your Amiga's monitor display.

You don't need a degree in catering management (*What? – Ed*) to work out what BarClock does – yep, it's a clock program.

It's not just any old clock program, however. No siree. BarClock is a combined clock/calendar commodity for Workbench 2.0-based Amigas that displays both the time and date on the right-hand side of the Workbench titlebar.

One of the most impressive aspects of BarClock is the extent to which it allows you to customise what it displays in the Workbench titlebar. Simply by amending the program's TooTypes, you can easily toggle whether BarClock displays the date/day, whether it uses a 12 or 24 hour clock, whether it should display seconds and so on.

BE A SUBS' DISK STAR!

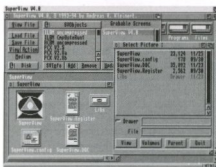
Have you written a utility or a game that you'd like to share with your fellow subscribers? Or perhaps you've created a tune with OctaMED, an Imagine 3D object or an outline font you think that other subscribers would be interested in obtaining. If so, why not get them published on the Amiga Format Subscribers' Disk?

If you want to submit programs for consideration, or if you have any suggestions or comments on the types of program you'd like to see on the Subscribers' Disk, please write to:

Jason Holborn,
Amiga Format Subscribers' Superdisk,
Future Publishing,
30 Monmouth Street,
Bath, Avon BA1 2BW.

DPaint. Unless you can afford a dedicated image processing program like ASDG's *Art Department Professional*, you'll never get ILBM to load the image unless it was stored in ILBM in the first place. Thanks to SuperView, however, all your image problems are solved.

SuperView is primarily a tool designed to enable you to view pictures on your Amiga without having to resort to a paint program like DPaint. Unlike similar programs, however, SuperView can handle an array of different image formats – GIF, PCX, JPEG, BMP and Targa being just five of the more common formats that the program supports. You can also convert between these formats so there's no reason whatsoever why you can't use SuperView to translate your friend's PCX images to Amiga IFF format.



Convert between a number of image formats using SuperView on this month's Subscribers' Superdisk.

Before you can run SuperView, a number of library files need to be installed on your Workbench. Don't worry – this isn't at all painful. Boot Workbench, load a Shell window and enter the following command.

Copy SubDisk68:SuperView/Libs
ALL Libs:

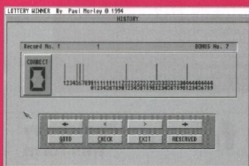
LASTALERT2

A crashed Amiga is frustrating at the best of times but wouldn't it be nice if you actually knew what had caused the crash?

OK, so your Amiga does attempt to provide you with a little bit of information whenever the dreaded Software Failure requester appears, but the numbers that are displayed are rarely of use unless you've memorised the entire contents of the ROM Kernel manuals.

LastAlert2 is a utility that aims to let you know exactly what went wrong whenever your Amiga crashes using something that is sadly lacking from most of the Amiga's Operating System – plain English.

Simply copy the LastAlert2 program into your WBStartup drawer and then whenever a



Increase your chances of winning the National Lottery with this brilliant lottery predictor.

OK, nothing special so far, but Lottery Winner does a lot more than just randomly generate six numbers. Thanks to its powerful history functions, it can actually generate numbers by analysing what numbers have already been picked so that – in theory at least – Lottery Winner's predictions should become better as time passes.

GAMES NEWS

We've had quite a few calls involving the loading, or more specifically, the non-loading of *Zeewolf* on certain Amigas.

The fault is not due to Binary Asylum's incompetence or anything like that. No, the guilt lies firmly at the door of certain Panasonic drives. It seems that the search times on this type of drive vary considerably compared to other drives. Therefore, whole chunks of information were being read at the wrong time and consequently *Zeewolf* wouldn't work.

The fault has now been fixed - a new version of the game has been remastered that will work with all drives.

If you experience problems with loading your copy of the game, send the disk - not the packaging or manual - to: *Zeewolf* Returns, Binary Asylum, 28 Brock Street, Bath, Avon BA1 2LN or *Zeewolf* Returns, Empire Software, 677 High Road, North Finchley, London N12 0DA.

Apache Soft are putting the finishing touches to their Doom-style chase-and-kill romp, *Death Mask*. It's going to be published by Alternative who for reasons of unpretentiousness (we assume) have opted to rename the game *Death Mask*.

Details are scant on whether it will include a serial link connection, but there's definitely a split-screen option so that two players can play against each other.



Acid Software's excellent CD³² flying-and-shooting-in-a-kind-of-Defender-way game, *Guardian* should now be available on the A1200. Inset: A few teething problems with *Zeewolf* have now been sorted.

Look out for more news about how *Death Mask* is progressing in forthcoming issues of *Amiga Format*.

The good news from Acid Software is that *Guardian* (AF85 88%) no longer belongs exclusively in the realms of CD³² land. As you read this, it will be available on the A1200

and in the shops. We haven't got any price details, but it shouldn't cost any more than thirty quid.

Staying with Acid Software, *Skidmarks 2* is nearing completion. It's similar to the original *Skidmarks*, only with loads of different tracks and up to eight cars on track at the same time.

ROM decision-making process? Forget it and give us CD-ROM. Now.

Thirdly, the CD³² needs a facelift. Let's be honest: it's the ugliest machine on the market, with the possible exception of the ludicrously-shaped Atari Jaguar. The CD³² has proved a popular and able console, but unless it's to die over the next year it needs to look the part and it needs some killer games.

The FMV port would also be much better utilised by having an upgrade cartridge with some decent hardware in it. Compared to the likes of Sega's Saturn and the Sony PlayStation, the CD³² is a board game - sorry, but the truth hurts.

The New Amiga Co. (for want of a better name) will need to develop a CD³² MkII at some point. And if the custom silicon could be slotted into existing CD³²s - as with the Mega Drive's 32X expansion - it would give them a much stronger platform with which to attack the market. But if the CD³² is still on

sale this time next year in its current form, it's going to take a real bashing at the hands of the Japanese monsters.

Indeed, R&D is going to be vital for the future success of the entire Amiga line; and hard commitment to R&D is needed to ensure continued confidence in the Amiga community - the users, the software producers and hardware manufacturers.

Whatever shape or form the next generation of Amigas may take, whether they're RISC-based or not, I believe that any new hardware must be unveiled - or at least have the technical specs revealed - before the end of this year. When computer technology is moving at such a pace, the Amiga simply can't afford to be seen to be standing still while other platforms embrace and exploit the new specifications.

I also think it would be a good idea to license the Amiga technology to other manufacturers, so that, as with PCs, you could buy an Amstrad Amiga, or a Hewlett Packard

Amiga or a Samsung Amiga. One of the reasons for the success of the PC is that anyone can manufacture an IBM-compatible machine. Therefore the consumer has a far greater choice of hardware, there are more machines on the shelves with more advertising, and the machines are more competitively priced.

Wouldn't it be great to see differently branded A4000s sitting alongside - and consequently stealing the limelight from - their PC counterparts?

Whatever happens I've got absolutely no doubt that 1995 is going to be a very interesting year!

Write to Backstage

If there's anything you would like to see in *Backstage* or *Amiga Format*, write to:

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